

Development Process and Engagement Strategy

To develop the Water Strategy, the OGL formed an interagency steering committee that included representatives from the MDEQ, MDARD, MDNR and MEDC. The steering committee met throughout the development of the Strategy to brainstorm, evaluate recommendations, consider input and public comment, review content and provide direction. Additional state agencies including Michigan Departments of Transportation, Education, and Health and Human Services and Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MHSDA) and the MI Place Partnership Initiative reviewed the draft strategy and helped develop and refine ideas about water literacy, public health, recreational and commercial harbors, maritime strategies, and water in placemaking.

An additional, external advisory committee, named the Water Cabinet, informed the Strategy's broad goals and developed a set of long-term desired environmental, economic, social and cultural outcomes. The cabinet consisted of a diverse array of 25 individuals actively engaged in ensuring the long-term health, function and resiliency of Michigan's water resources and in encouraging and nurturing its economic and cultural values.

In order to reflect diverse public perspectives, the OGL led an extensive public engagement effort, integrated tribal involvement and engagement, and invited a series of 10 experts to develop white papers providing key insights on solutions for emerging and challenging problems that Michigan faces related to its water resources.

The draft goals and outcomes were tested at 10 regional economic roundtable discussions to understand how current local and regional economic development efforts depend on water. In addition, participants were asked to identify issues that should be reflected in a 30 year water strategy. These discussions ultimately contributed to the development of a suite of themes reflected in the Strategy.

The OGL additionally hosted "Water Dialogues" with 16 communities across the state, focused on understanding different communities' capacity to create and implement a vision for water resources. These facilitated conversations, supported by a grant from the C.S. Mott Foundation, helped develop implementation tactics for the Strategy, reinforce the themes and refine the focus of the draft Strategy.

The OGL invited each of the federally recognized tribes and tribal organizations to participate in a state hosted conference call to ask how the tribes would like to engage and be involved in the development of the water strategy. Ongoing dialogue and engagement was maintained with the tribes through conference calls, regional roundtables, water

dialogues, tribal and state hosted meetings, and tribal members were invited to participate on the Water Cabinet. The OGL also hosted an Earth Week event with the Little Traverse Band of Odawa Indians to share stories and experiences with water.

The OGL released the Draft Water Strategy on June 9, 2015 for review and comment. A concentrated effort was made to encourage broad public involvement and awareness of the draft Strategy. Outreach efforts included press releases, website postings, an informational webinar, presentations and an 80 day public comment opportunity via the website. The OGL reconvened 10 economic roundtable meeting participants to discuss the draft and opportunities for shared leadership and ownership on implementation. In addition, the OGL hosted six community conversations around the state that the public was encouraged to attend and participate. The OGL also hosted formal consultation with Michigan's federally recognized tribal governments to discuss the draft Water Strategy and have a meaningful exchange of ideas and input from the tribes on how we might best work together in implementing the strategy's key recommendations that support management of Michigan's shared water resources.

Over 150 written comments were received, including 750 specific comments on draft Water Strategy content. The Steering Committee has made every effort to address these comments in revisions to the Water Strategy.